

A message from LtCol James G. Flynn.

28 September 2007

Families of HMM-261 (REIN) Raging Bulls:

As we continue our deployment, I want to provide you all with a quick update on the deployment activities of the Raging Bulls of HMM-261 (REIN).

HMM-261 (REIN) CONTINUES ITS TRAINING IN KUWAIT...

Another week passes here at Udairi Airfield in Kuwait, and the Raging Bulls continue to press forward with their sustainment training. The Marines and Sailors have been working through the past several weeks in blistering heat, accompanied by the occasional dust storms, ensuring that we accomplish all of our training objectives. The aircrews have been busy flying desert landings, external load operations, night flying and live aerial gunnery training in the local area. In order to accomplish much of this training we have been working closely with 22d MEU's Battalion Landing Team 3/8 and Combat Logistics Battalion 22, as they have been providing superb support to our operations with their equipment and personnel. Additionally, the time at Udairi has allowed many of our Marines and Sailors to conduct required ground training, to include martial arts and weapons training.

Not to be forgotten, our AV-8B detachment and most of our MALS Marines have remained aboard ship and have been conducting operations aboard the USS Kearsarge. Just like the majority of the Squadron ashore, they are conducting extensive flight operations in support missions in the Northern Arabian Gulf. Just recently they returned to sea following a liberty port call to Bahrain, where they were able to enjoy a few relaxing days of liberty before returning to flight operations. I had the opportunity to fly back to the ship and visit them a week ago, and they are all doing well.

In addition to the daily training that has been ongoing here at Udairi, the Squadron was recently assigned the mission of accomplishing three days of tactical trooplifts, ferrying soldiers and airmen out of Camp Bucca, Iraq, and back into Kuwait. For the Squadron, this proved to be an enormous morale booster, as all hands were excited to demonstrate the exceptional capabilities of the Raging Bulls. In addition to utilizing all of our rotary wing aircraft, the Marine Air Control Group and Marine Wing Support Squadron detachments provided essential aviation support at both Udairi Airfield and the pick up location in Iraq. The flawless execution of this mission exemplified the professionalism and dedication of this Squadron to accomplish any mission that may be assigned to the Raging Bulls.

After nearly a month of non-stop operations, the Squadron is taking a break today to catch up on sleep, personal business, and to enjoy each other's camaraderie. Our Family Readiness Officers have set up several sporting events that will allow the Marines to display their softball, volleyball and basketball skills. An afternoon of competitive outdoor activity should allow most to "blow off some steam" before we finish up several more weeks of operations.

Because of our location, the Marines and Sailors have been getting mail on a regular basis. Many thanks for keeping it flowing our way, as it keeps up our morale and ties to home close. Likewise, MOTOMAIL has been working well, and I see a lot of Marines receiving those messages. Everyone is making most of the readily accessible phones, computers, and videocams available through MWR to keep in touch with families and friends back home.

I will tell you that the Marines and Sailors are doing great! They are motivated about the work they are doing, and they are enjoying the opportunity to be ashore training and conducting operational missions. They continue to impress me with their "can do" attitude, even when faced with the challenging environment they are working in. Years ago this Squadron was labeled "America's Squadron", and without question, they continue to uphold this reputation each and every day.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED...

If you should have any concerns, questions, or just need some moral support during our deployment, I encourage you to contact your Key Volunteer, Family Readiness Staff Non-commissioned Officer, our family hotline, or this website (www.22meu.usmc.mil) to obtain up-to-date information you need to stay in touch. Please keep in mind that official and factual information regarding the Squadron's movements, activities, and operations will come solely from the 22d MEU (SOC) Commanding Officer through me. ***Information sourced from me will only be delivered through the channels mentioned previously.***

As the Fall season commences back home, and our memories of cooler temperatures, family gatherings, and football games come to mind, we remember more importantly our families and friends back home who continue to keep us in their thoughts and prayers as we complete the first two months of this deployment. Many thanks again to all! My best wishes to our families and friends back home!

Rage On!

James G. Flynn
Lieutenant Colonel, USMC
Commanding Officer
Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 (Reinforced)
22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)